

As a sociologist who continues to examine privately-owned for-profit corporate media and their efforts at increased consolidation I see the current behavior of Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force its owned and operated stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election as a clear example of the reasons why deregulation of media is dangerous to democracy.

Sinclair, along with all corporate broadcast media, uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. However, the partisan nature of Sinclair's behavior shows me that providing this public service, free, to the likes of Sinclair (with little oversight) is not an adequate return on my investment as a citizen. I expect my news to be presented in a neutral, unbiased way. I also expect that if corporate broadcast media are going to reduce their airtime of election debates so they can gain additional profits through selling political advertising time, then I expect that to be a uniform behavior across all broadcast media. If one political party is given primacy over another, on my airwaves, then I

expect the regulator
to do something
about it.

This means I am not
asking - no, I am
demanding - that
you, the FCC, do
something about this
(remember the
Fairness Doctrine?)
and force Sinclair
to provide equal
air-time to both
political parties.
To do any less makes
you complicit in
turning our public
airwaves into
private, politically
partisan
mouthpieces.

Sinclair's actions
show why we need to
strengthen media
ownership rules, not
weaken them. This is
the perfect example
of why the license
renewal process
needs to involve
more than a returned
postcard.

Thank you.